

17 February 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Committee on Imagery Requirements  
and Exploitation

SUBJECT : Overhead Photographic Reconnaissance  
of Cuba

REFERENCE : COMIREX-D-24.3/4B, 5 February 1976  
(via LDX)

Forwarded herewith is a copy of subject statement of requirements  
as finally coordinated by COMIREX members for their USIB principals.  
The attachment was forwarded to the NIO for Latin America this date.

Executive Secretary  
Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

Attachment  
JCS review(s) completed.

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WARNING NOTICE  
Sensitive Intelligence Sources  
and Methods Involved

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MORI/CDF

## COMMITTEE ON IMAGERY REQUIREMENTS AND EXPLOITATION

13 February 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The National Intelligence Officer,  
Latin America

SUBJECT : Overhead Photographic Reconnaissance of Cuba

REFERENCES : a. Memorandum for Holders-2, USIB-D-46.4/55  
(COMIREX-D-24.3/3), 27 August 1974 (Revised)

b. Memorandum for Holders-3, USIB-D-46.4/55  
(COMIREX-D-24.3/3), 20 May 1975

1. In response to your request for an updated assessment of community needs for overhead photographic reconnaissance of Cuba, the COMIREX has reviewed the currently applicable USIB standing guidance on this subject (reference a.). As the result of our review, and subsequent canvas of USIB principals, the intelligence requirements as stated in that document are reaffirmed.

2. It continues to be the COMIREX judgement that imagery satellite sources are capable of satisfying the community's routine area and target coverage needs.

there remains a continuing need to maintain an aircraft overhead photographic reconnaissance capability against the island to provide time sensitive intelligence.

4. The existing provisions should be continued, therefore, to maintain a standby capability to overfly Cuba against specific objectives in the event that time-critical needs develop. Because the special situations which have required time-sensitive collection in the past have been infrequent and have developed with some advance awareness by the intelligence community it is judged that a 96-hour standby capability -- to be brought to a higher degree of readiness when a specific situation warrants -- is adequate to meet foreseeable needs.

5. The present Cuba overflight program by SR-71 aircraft (GIANT PLATE) is responsive to the political requirement to maintain a continuing U.S. presence over the island, and also serves to maintain the capability for the special needs noted in paragraph 4 above.

a. Assessment of the policy aspect of maintaining a U.S. presence from the political standpoint is not directly keyed to intelligence requirements. We understand that the political aspect is being addressed separately by appropriate Department of State elements.

b. From the standpoint of intelligence requirements, maintenance of some continuing overflight of Cuba is necessary to minimize the impact of special, time-critical collection when that is necessary. Maintenance of periodic overflights reduces significance of the special flights. Moreover, the routine overflights which are undertaken for the purpose of maintaining a U.S. presence also serve as a source of intelligence collection on various aspects of the Cuban air defense environment which serves to update and maintain intelligence on the Cuban air defense system on a relatively current basis.

6. SR-71 overflights of Cuba have taken account of the status of imagery coverage obtained from the satellite systems, and, in turn, satellite system targeting has regularly taken account of the products from SR-71 25X1

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overflights. If a decision is made to continue SR-71 overflight of Cuba, schedules and tracks should continue to be optimized to obtain imagery useful for intelligence purposes

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Chairman

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